

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT
AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION FOR
UNITED STATES UTILITY PATENT

APPARATUS IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS AND METHODS

INVENTORS
RHEINHOLD KAMMANN
MANFRED WORMS
CLIVE LAM
GUY L. MCCLUNG, III

APPARATUS IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS AND METHODS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field Of The Invention

5

1. This invention is directed to systems and methods for identifying items; and, in certain aspects to identifying items in the oil and gas industry; and in one particular aspect to identifying tubulars, including, but not limited to, pieces of
10 drill pipe, using radio frequency identification devices and/or sensible indicia.

Description of Related Art

15 2. The prior art discloses a variety of systems and methods for using surface acoustic wave tags or radio frequency identification tags in identifying items, including items used in the oil and gas industry such as drill pipe. (See e.g. U.S. Patents 4,698,631; 5,142,128; 5,202,680; 5,360,967; 6,333,699;
20 6,333,700; 6,347,292; 6,480,811; and U.S. Patent Applications Ser. Nos. 10/323,536 filed Dec. 18, 2002; 09/843,998 filed Apr. 27, 2001; 10/047,436 filed Jan. 14, 2002; 10/261,551 filed Sep. 30, 2002; 10/032,114 filed Dec. 21, 2001; and 10/013,255 filed Nov. 5, 2001; all incorporated fully herein for all purposes.) In many of
25 these systems a radio frequency identification tag or "RFIDT" is used on pipe at such a location either interiorly or exteriorly of a pipe, that the RFIDT is exposed to extreme temperatures and conditions downhole in a wellbore. Often an RFIDT so positioned fails and is of no further use. Also, in many instances, an RFIDT
30 so positioned is subjected to damage above ground due to the rigors of handling and manipulation.

3. The present inventors have realized that substantial usefulness for a tubular identification system can be achieved by

divorcing the desire for effective above-ground identification and operation from the goal of downhole accessibility.

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

5

4. The present invention, in certain aspects, provides a tubular, e.g. a piece of drill pipe, with a radio frequency identification tag in a recess in an end thereof so that the RFIDT is protected from shocks (pressure, impacts, thermal) that may be encountered in a wellbore or during drilling operations. In one particular aspect, the present invention discloses systems and methods in which a piece of drill pipe with threaded pin and box ends has one or more circumferential recesses formed in the pin end into which is emplaced one or more radio frequency identification tags each with an integrated circuit and with an antenna encircling the pin end within A recess. The RFIDT (OR RFIDT'S) is protected by a layer of filler, glue or adhesive, e.g. epoxy material, and/or by a cap ring corresponding to and closing off the recess. Such a cap ring may be made of metal (magnetic; or nonmagnetic, e.g. aluminum, stainless steel, silver, gold, platinum and titanium), plastic, composite, polytetrafluoroethylene, fiberglass, ceramic, and/or cermet. The RFIDT can be, in certain aspects, any known commercially-available read-only or read-write radio frequency identification tag and any suitable known reader system, manual, fixed, and/or automatic may be used to read the RFIDT.

5. In certain particular aspects an RFIDT is encased in a ring of protective material whose shape and configuration corresponds to the shape of the pin end's recess and the ring is either permanently or removably positioned in the recess. Such a ring may be used without or in conjunction with an amount of protective material covering the ring or with a cap ring that protectively covers the RFIDT. Two or more RFIDT's may be used in one recess and/or there may be multiple recesses at different levels. In other aspects a ring is provided which is emplaceable

around a member, either a generally cylindrical circular member or a member with some other shape.

6. With an RFIDT located in a pipe's pin end as described herein, upon makeup of a joint including two such pieces of pipe, an RFIDT in one pipe's pin end is completely surrounded by pipe material - including that of a corresponding pipe's box end - and the RFIDT is sealingly protected from access by materials flowing through the pipe and from materials exterior to the pipe. The mass of pipe material surrounding the enclosed RFIDT also protects it from the temperature extremes of materials within and outside of the pipe.

7. In other aspects [with or without an RFIDT in a recess] sensible material and/or indicia are located within a recess and, in one aspect, transparent material is placed above the material and/or indicia for visual inspection or monitoring; and, in one aspect, such sensible material and/or indicia are in or on a cap ring.

8. A pipe with a pin end recess as described herein can be a piece of typical pipe in which the recess is formed, e.g. by machining or with laser apparatus or by drilling; or the pipe can be manufactured with the recess formed integrally thereof. In certain particular aspects, in cross-section a recess has a shape that is square, rectangular, triangular, semi-triangular, circular, semi-circular, trapezoid, dovetail, or rhomboid.

9. It has also been discovered that such a protective location of an RFIDT can be accomplished in other generally tubular apparatuses in addition to drill pipe, or in a member, device, or apparatus that has a cross-section area that permits circumferential installation of antenna apparatus including, but not limited to, in casing, drill collars, (magnetic or nonmagnetic) pipe, thread protectors, centralizers, stabilizers, control line protectors, mills, plugs (including but not limited to cementing plugs), and risers; and in or on other apparatuses, including, but not limited to, whipstocks, tubular handlers, tubular manipulator,

tubular rotator, top drive, tong, spinner, downhole motor, elevator, spider, powered mouse hole, and pipe handler, sucker rods, and drill bits (all which can be made of or have portions of magnetizable metal or nonmagnetizable metal).

5 10. In certain aspects the present invention discloses a rig with a rig floor having thereon or embedded therein or positioned therebelow a tag reader system which reads RFIDT's in pipe or other apparatus placed on the rig floor above the tag reader system. All of such rig-floor-based reader systems, manually-operated reader
10 systems, and other fixed reader systems useful in methods and systems according to the present invention may be, in certain aspects, in communication with one or more control systems, e.g. computers, computerized systems, consoles, and/or control system located on the rig, on site, and/or remotely from the rig, either
15 via lines and/or cables or wirelessly. Such system can provide identification, inventory, and quality control functions and, in one aspect, are useful to insure that desired tubulars, and only desired tubulars, go downhole and/or that desired apparatus, and only desired apparatus, is used on the rig. In certain aspects one or more RFIDT's is positioned in a recess in a box end of a tubular. In certain aspects antennas of RFIDT's according to the present invention have a diameter between one quarter inch to ten inches and in particular aspects this range is between two inches and four inches. Such systems can also be used with certain
25 RFIDT's to record on a read-write apparatus therein historical information related to current use of a tubular member; e.g., but not limited to, that this particular tubular member is being used at this time in this particular string, and/or with particular torque applied thereto by this particular apparatus.

30 11. In other aspects, a pipe with a pin end recess described therein has emplaced therein or thereon a member or ring with or without an RFIDT and with sensible indicia, e.g., one or a series of signature cuts, etchings, holes, notches, indentations, alpha and/or numeric characters, raised portion(s) and/or voids, filled

in or not with filler material (e.g. but not limited to, epoxy material and/or nonmagnetic or magnetic metal, composite, fiberglass, plastic, ceramic and/or cermet), which indicia are visually identifiable and/or can be sensed by sensing systems (including, but not limited to, systems using ultrasonic sensing, eddy current sensing, optical/laser sensing, and/or microwave sensing). Similarly it is within the scope of the present invention to provide a cap ring (or a ring to be emplaced in a recess) as described herein (either for closing off a recess or for attachment to a pin end which has no such recess) with such indicia which can be sensed visually or with sensing equipment.

12. It is within the scope of this invention to provide a member as described herein with a circular recess as described above with energizable identification apparatus other than or in addition to one or more RFIDT's; including, for example one or more surface acoustic wave tags ("SAW tags") with its antenna apparatus in the circular apparatus.

13. What follows are some of, but not all, the objects of this invention. In addition to the specific objects stated below for at least certain preferred embodiments of the invention, other objects and purposes will be readily apparent to one of skill in this art who has the benefit of this invention's teachings and disclosures. It is, therefore, an object of at least certain preferred embodiments of the present invention to provide:

14. New, useful, unique, efficient, nonobvious devices, systems and methods for apparatus identification, tracking, inventory and control and, in certain aspects, such systems and methods employing identification device(s), e.g. one or more RFIDT and/or one or more SAW tags;

15. Such systems and methods in which a member is provided with one or more recesses into which one or more identification devices are placed;

16. Such systems and methods in which the member is a cylindrical or tubular member and the recess (or recesses) is a

circumferential recess around either or both ends thereof, made or integrally formed therein;

17. Such systems and methods in which filler material and/or a cap ring is installed permanently or releasably over a recess to close it off and protect identification device(s);

18. Such systems and methods in which aspects of the present invention are combined in a nonobvious and new manner with existing apparatuses to provide dual redundancy identification;

19. Such systems and methods in which an sensing-containing member (flexible or rigid) is placed within or on an item; and

20. Such systems and methods which include a system on, in, or under a rig floor, and/or on equipment, for sensing identification device apparatus according to the present invention.

21. Certain embodiments of this invention are not limited to any particular individual feature disclosed here, but include combinations of them distinguished from the prior art in their structures and functions. Features of the invention have been broadly described so that the detailed descriptions that follow may be better understood, and in order that the contributions of this invention to the arts may be better appreciated. There are, of course, additional aspects of the invention described below and which may be included in the subject matter of the claims to this invention. Those skilled in the art who have the benefit of this invention, its teachings, and suggestions will appreciate that the conceptions of this disclosure may be used as a creative basis for designing other structures, methods and systems for carrying out and practicing the present invention. The claims of this invention are to be read to include any legally equivalent devices or methods which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

22. The present invention recognizes and addresses the previously-mentioned problems and long-felt needs and provides a solution to those problems and a satisfactory meeting of those needs in its various possible embodiments and equivalents thereof.

To one skilled in this art who has the benefits of this invention's realizations, teachings, disclosures, and suggestions, other purposes and advantages will be appreciated from the following description of preferred embodiments, given for the purpose of disclosure, when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. The detail in these descriptions is not intended to thwart this patent's object to claim this invention no matter how others may later disguise it by variations in form or additions of further improvements.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

23. A more particular description of embodiments of the invention briefly summarized above may be had by references to the embodiments which are shown in the drawings which form a part of this specification. These drawings illustrate certain preferred embodiments and are not to be used to improperly limit the scope of the invention which may have other equally effective or legally equivalent embodiments.

24. Figs. 1A and 1B are perspective views of a pin end of a drill pipe according to the present invention. Fig. 1C is a partial cross-sectional view of the drill pipe of Fig. 1A. Fig. 1D shows shapes for recesses according to the present invention.

25. Fig. 2 is a graphical representation of a prior art commercially-available radio frequency identification tag apparatus.

26. Fig. 2A is a perspective view of a torus according to the present invention. Fig. 2B is a side view partially in cross-section, of the torus of Fig. 2B.

27. Fig. 2C is a top perspective view of a torus according to the present invention. Fig. 2D is a side view in cross-section of a recess according to the present invention with the torus of Fig. 2C therein.

28. Fig. 2E is a top view in cross-section of a torus

according to the present invention.

29. Fig. 2F is a top view of a torus according to the present invention. Fig. 2G is a side view of the torus of Fig. 2F.

30. Fig. 2H is a side view of a torus according to the present invention.

31. Fig. 2I is a top view of a cap ring according to the present invention. Fig. 2J is a side view of the cap ring of Fig. 2I.

32. Fig. 2K is a top view of a cap ring according to the present invention. Fig. 2L is a side view of the cap ring of Fig. 2K.

33. Fig. 2M is a top view of a cap ring according to the present invention.

34. Fig. 3A is a side view, partially in cross-section, of a tubular according to the present invention. Fig. 3B is an enlarged view of a box end of the tubular of Fig. 3A. Fig. 3C is an enlarged view of a pin end of the tubular of Fig. 3A.

35. Fig. 4A is a side schematic view of a rig according to the present invention. Fig. 4B is a side view partially in cross-section of a tubular according to the present invention. Fig. 4C is a schematic view of the system of Fig. 4A.

36. Figs. 5A, 5C and 5D are schematic views of systems according to the present invention. Fig. 5B is a side view of a tubular according to the present invention.

37. Fig. 6 is a side view of a tubular according to the present invention.

38. Fig. 7A is a side view of a tubular according to the present invention. Fig. 7B is a cross-section view of the tubular of Fig. 7A.

39. Fig. 8A is a side view of a stabilizer according to the present invention. Fig. 8B is a cross-section view of the stabilizer of Fig. 8A. Fig. 8C is a side view of a centralizer according to the present invention. Fig. 8D is a cross-section view of the centralizer of Fig. 8C. Fig. 8E is a side view of a

centralizer according to the present invention. Fig. 8F is a cross-section view of the centralizer of Fig. 8E. Fig. 8G is a side view of a centralizer according to the present invention. Fig. 8H is a cross-section view of the centralizer of Fig. 8E.

5 40. Figs. 9A, 9B, and 10A are side cross-section views of thread protectors according to the present invention. Fig. 10B is a perspective view of a thread protector according to the present invention.

10 41. Fig. 11 is a cross-section view of a thread protector according to the present invention.

42. Fig. 12A is a schematic side view of a drilling rig system according to the present invention. Fig. 12B is an enlarged view of part of the system of Fig. 12A.

15 43. Fig. 13A is a side view of a system according to the present invention. Fig. 13B is a side view of part of the system of Fig. 13A.

20 44. Fig. 14A is a schematic view of a system according to the present invention with a powered mouse hole. Fig. 14B is a side view of the powered mouse hole of Fig. 14A. Fig. 14C is a cross-section view of part of the powered mouse hole of Figs. 14 A and B. Fig. 14D is a side view of a powered mouse hole tool according to the present invention.

25 45. Fig. 15A is a side view of a top drive according to the present invention. Fig. 15B is an enlarged view of part of the top drive of Fig. 15A.

46. Figs. 16A and 16B are side cross-section views of plugs according to the present invention.

30 47. Fig. 17A is a perspective view of a portable RFIDT bearing ring according to the present invention. Fig. 17B is a side view of the ring of Fig. 17A. Fig. 17C is a perspective view of the ring of Fig. 17A with the ring opened. Fig. 17D is a top view of a ring according to the present invention. Fig. 17E is a top view of a ring according to the present invention.

48. Fig. 18A is a side view of a whipstock according to the

present invention. Fig. 18B is a bottom view of the whipstock of Fig. 18A.

49. Fig. 19 is a side view of a mill according to the present invention.

5 50. Figs. 20A and 20B are perspective views of pipe manipulators according to the present invention.

51. Fig. 21 is a schematic view of a system according to the present invention.

10 52. Figs. 22 and 23 are schematic views of systems according to the present invention.

53. Fig. 24 is a perspective view of a blowout preventer according to the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS PREFERRED

15 AT THE TIME OF FILING FOR THIS PATENT

54. Figs. 1A - 1C show a pin end 10 of a drill pipe according to the present invention which has a sealing shoulder 12 and a threaded end portion 14. A typical flow channel 18 extends through the drill pipe from one end to the other. A recess 20 in the top 16 (as viewed in Fig. 1C) of the pin end 10 extends around the entire circumference of the top 16. This recess 20 is shown with a generally rectangular shape, but it is within the scope of this invention to provide a recess with any desired cross-sectional shape, including, but not limited to, the shapes shown in Fig. 1D. In one aspect an entire drill pipe piece with a pin end 10 is like the tubular shown in Fig. 3A or the drill pipe of Fig. 12B. The recess 20 (as is true for any recess of any embodiment disclosed herein) may be at any depth (as viewed in Fig. 1C) from the end of the pin end and, as shown in Figs. 1A - 1C may, according to the present invention, be located so that no thread is adjacent the recess.

55. It is within the scope of the present invention to form the recess 20 in a standard piece of drill pipe with a typical

machine tool, drill, with a laser apparatus such as a laser cutting apparatus, or with etching apparatus. Alternatively, it is within the scope of the present invention to manufacture a piece of drill pipe (or other tubular) with the recess formed integrally in the pin end (and/or in a box end). The recess as shown in Fig. 1C is about 5 mm wide and 5 mm deep; but it is within the scope of certain embodiments of the present invention to have such a recess that is between 1 mm and 10 mm wide and between 2 mm and 20 mm deep.

56. A cap ring 22 is installed over the recess 20 which seals the space within the recess 20. This cap ring 22 (as may be any cap ring of any embodiment herein) may be made of any suitable material, including, but not limited to: metal, aluminum, zinc, brass, bronze, steel, stainless steel, iron, silver, gold, platinum, titanium, aluminum alloys, zinc alloys, or carbon steel; composite; plastic, fiberglass, fiber material such as ARAMID TM fiber material; KEVLAR TM or other similar material; ceramic; or cermet. The cap ring 22 may be sealingly installed using glue, adhesive, and/or welding (e.g., but not limited to Tig, Mig, and resistance welding and laser welding processes).

57. Disposed within the recess 20 beneath the cap ring 22, as shown in Fig. 1C, is an RFIDT device 28 which includes a tag 24 and an antenna 26. The antenna 26 encircles the recess 20 around the pin end's circumference and has two ends, each connected to the tag

24. The RFIDT tag device may be any suitable known device, including, but not limited to the RFID devices commercially available, as in Fig. 2, e.g. from MBBS Company of Switzerland, e.g. its E-Units TM (TAGs) devices e.g., as in Fig. 2. The RFIDT device 28 may be a read-only or a read-write device. It is within the scope of this invention to provide one, two, three or more such devices in a recess 20 (or in any recess of any embodiment herein). Optionally, the RFIDT device (or devices) is eliminated and a recess 20 with a particular varied bottom and/or varied side wall(s) and/or a cap ring with a nonuniform, varied, and/or

structured surface or part(s) is used which variation(s) can be sensed and which provide a unique signature for a particular piece of drill pipe (as may be the case for any other embodiment of the present invention). These variations, etc. may be provided by
5 different heights in a recess or different dimensions of projections or protrusions from a recess lower surface or recess side wall surface, by etchings thereon or on a cap ring, by cuts thereon or therein, and/or by a series of notches and/or voids in a recess and/or in a cap ring and/or by sensible indicia.
10 Optionally, instead of the RFIDT device 28 (and for any embodiment herein any RFIDT) an SAW tag may be used and corresponding suitable apparatuses and systems for energizing the SAW tag(s) and reading them.

58. In certain aspects of the present invention with a recess
15 like the recess 20 as described above, a ring or torus is releasably or permanently installed within the recess with or without a cap ring thereover (like the cap ring 22). Such a ring or torus may have one, two, or more (or no) RFIDT's therein. Fig. 2A and 2B show a torus 30 installable within a recess, like the
20 recess 20 or any recess as in Fig. 1C, which includes a body 31 with a central opening 31a. An RFIDT 32 is encased on the body 31. The RFIDT 32 has an integrated circuit 33 and an antenna 34 which encircles the body 31. In certain aspects the body 31 (as may be any body of any torus or ring according to the present invention)
25 is made of metal, plastic, polytetrafluorethylene, fiberglass, composite, ceramic, or of a nonmagnetizable metal. The opening 31a (as may be any opening of any torus or ring herein) may be any desired diameter.

59. Figs. 2C and 2D show a torus 35 which has a central
30 opening 35a, a body 36 and an RFIDT 37 therein with an antenna 38 that encircles the body 36 and an integrated circuit 39. In one aspect a recess 20a in a body for receiving a torus 35 has an upper lip 20b (or inwardly inclined edge or edges as shown in Fig. 2D) and the body 36 is made of resilient material which is sufficiently

flexible that the torus 35 may be pushed into the recess 20a and releasably held therein without adhesives and without a cap ring, although it is within the scope of the present invention to use adhesive and/or a cap ring with a torus 35.

5 60. Fig. 2E shows a torus 40 according to the present invention with a body 40a which is insertable into a recess (like the recess 20, the recess 20a, or any recess disclosed herein) which has one or more elements 41 therein which serve as strengthening members and/or as members which provide a unique
10 sensible signature for the torus 40 and, therefore, for any pipe or other item employing a torus 40. The torus 40 has a central opening 40b and may, according to the present invention, also include one, two or more RFIDT's (not shown).

15 61. Figs. 2F and 2G show a torus 44 according to the present invention insertable into any recess disclosed herein which has a body 45, a central opening 44a, and a series of voids 46a, 46b, and 46c. With such a torus 44 made of metal, the voids 46a - 46c can be sensed by any sensing apparatus or method disclosed herein and provide a unique sensible signature for the torus 44 and for any
20 item employing such a torus 44. Any torus described herein may have such a series of voids and any such series of voids may, according to the present invention, contain any desired number (one or more) of voids of any desired dimensions. In one particular aspect, a series of voids provides a barcode which is readable by
25 suitable known barcode reading devices. A torus 44 can be used with or without a cap ring. As desired, as is true of any torus according to the present invention, one, two, or more RFIDT's may be used within or on the torus body. Voids may be made by machining, by drilling, by etching, by laser etching, by hardfacing
30 or using a photovoltaic process.

62. Fig. 2H shows a torus 47 according to the present invention useful in any recess of any embodiment herein which has a series of sensible ridges 48a - 48f which can be made by adding material to a torus body 49 [such a torus may have visually

readable indicia, e.g. alpha (letter) and/or numeric characters]. Any torus, ring, or cap ring herein may have one or more such ridges and the ridges can have different cross-sections (e.g. as in Fig. 2H) or similar cross-sections and they can be any suitable material, including, but not limited to metal, plastic, epoxy, carbides, and hardfacing. Also, according to the present invention, a cap ring with one or more RFIDT's and/or any other sensible material and/or indicia disclosed herein may be placed around and secured to a tubular's pin end or box end without using a recess.

63. Fig. 2M shows a cap ring 22a, like the cap ring 22, but with sensible indicia 22b - 22f made therein or thereon for sensing by an optical sensing system, an ultrasonic sensing system, an eddy current sensing system, a barcode sensing system, or a microwave sensing system. A cap ring 22a may be releasably or permanently installed in or over a recess like any recess disclosed herein. The indicia 22b - 22f may be like any of the indicia or sensible structures disclosed herein.

64. Figs. 2I and 2J show a specific cap ring 50 according to the present invention for use with drill pipe having a pin end. The ring 50 has a body with an outer diameter 50a of 98mm, a thickness 50b of 5mm, and a wall thickness 50c of 5mm. Figs. 2K and 2L show a specific cap ring 51 according to the present invention for use with a drill pipe pin end having an end portion diameter of about four inches. The ring 51 has an outer diameter 51a of 98mm, a thickness 51b of 8 to 10mm, and a wall thickness 51c of 3mm.

65. It is within the scope of the present invention to provide a tubular having a box end and a pin end (each threaded or not) (e.g. casing, riser, pipe, drill pipe, drill collar, tubing), each end with an RFIDT in a recess therein (as any recess described herein) with or without a cap ring (as any described herein). Figs. 3A - 3C show a generally cylindrical hollow tubular member 480 according to the present invention with a flow channel 480a

therethrough from top to bottom and which has a threaded pin end 481 and a threaded box end 482. The threaded box end 482 has a circumferential recess 483 with an RFIDT 484 therein. The RFIDT has an IC 485 and an antenna 486 which encircles the box end.

5 Optionally, filler material 487 in the recess 483 encases and protects the IC 485 and the antenna 486; and an optional circular cap ring 488 closes off the recess. The RFIDT and its parts and the cap ring may be as any disclosed or referred to herein. Optionally, the tubular member 480 may have a shoulder recess 483a
10 with an RFIDT 484a with an IC 485a and an antenna 486a. Filler material 487a (optional) encases the RFIDT 484a and, optionally, a cap ring 488a closes off the recess.

66. The pin end 481 has a circumferential recess 491 in which is disposed an RFIDT 492 with an IC 493 and an antenna 494 around
15 the pin end. As with the box end, filler material and/or a cap ring may be used with the recess 491. Antenna size is related to how easy it is to energize an IC and, therefore, the larger the antenna, the easier [less power needed and/or able to energize at a greater distance] to energize; and, due to the relatively large
20 circumference of some tubulars, energizing end antennas is facilitated.

67. Fig. 4A shows a system 70 according to the present invention with a rig 60 according to the present invention which has in a rig floor 61 a reading system 65 (shown schematically) for
25 reading one or more RFIDT's in a drill pipe 66 which is to be used in drilling a wellbore. The reading system 65 incorporates one or more known reading apparatuses for reading RFIDT's, including, but not limited to suitable readers as disclosed in the prior art and readers as commercially available from MBBS Co. of Switzerland.
30 The present invention provides improvements of the apparatuses and systems disclosed in U.S. Patent Application Ser. No. 09/906,957 filed July 16, 2001 and published on February 7, 2002 as Publication No. 2002/0014966. In an improved system 70 according to the present invention a drill pipe 66 (Fig. 4B) is like the

drill pipes 16 in U.S. Patent Application Ser. No. 09/906,957, but the drill pipe 66 has a recess 67 with a torus 68 therein having at least one RFIDT 69 (shown schematically in Fig. 4B) and a cap ring 68a over the torus 68. The drill pipe 66 may be connected with a tool joint 76 to other similar pieces of drill pipe in a drill string 77 (see Fig. 4A) as in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/906,957 (incorporated fully herein) and the systems and apparatuses associated with the system 70 (Fig. 4A and Fig. 4C) operate in a manner similar to that of the systems 10 and the system of Fig. 1B of said patent application.

68. Drill string 77 includes a plurality of drill pipes 66 coupled by a plurality of tool joints 76 and extends through a rotary table 78, and into a wellbore through a bell nipple 73 mounted on top of a blowout preventer stack 72. An identification tag (e.g. an RFIDT) 71 is provided on one or more drilling components, such as illustrated in Fig. 4A, associated with the system 70, or the drill pipe 66. An electromagnetic signal generator system 74 that includes an antenna and a signal generator is positioned proximate to an identification tag, for example just below rotary table 78 as illustrated in Fig. 4A. Electromagnetic signal generator system 74 establishes a communications link with an identification tag 71 to energize the antenna, interrogate it, and to convey information relating to the equipment or drill pipe.

69. The drilling system 70 includes the rig 60 with supports 83, a swivel 91, which supports the drill string 77, a kelly joint 92, a kelly drive bushing 93, and a spider 79 with an RFIDT sensor and/or reader 79a. A tool joint 76 is illustrated in Fig. 4A as connecting two drilling components such as drill pipes 66. The identification tag 71 (or the RFIDT 69 read by the system 65) is operated to communicate a response to an incoming electromagnetic signal generated by electromagnetic signal generator system 74 (or by the system 65) that includes information related to the drilling component with the identification tag. The information may be used, for example, to inform an operator of system 70 of a drilling

component's identity, age, weaknesses, previous usage or adaptability. According to the teachings of the present invention, this information may be communicated while drill system 70 is in operation. Some or all of the information provided in an identification tag may assist an operator in making a determination of when drilling components need to be replaced, or which drilling components may be used under certain conditions. The electromagnetic signal communicated by an identification tag or RFIDT may provide general inventory management data (such as informing an operator of the drilling components availability on the drilling site, or the drilling component's size, weight, etc.), or any other relevant drilling information associated with the system.

70. Additional drill string components 84, which are illustrated in Fig. 4A in a racked position, may be coupled to drill pipe 66 and inserted into the well bore, forming a portion of the drill string. One or more of drill string components may also include identification tags or RFIDT's.

71. Fig. 4C shows typical information that may be included within an identification tag's or RFIDT's, antenna as the antenna cooperates with electromagnetic signal generator 74 and/or the system 65 to transmit an electromagnetic energizing signal 85 to an identification tag 71 (or 69). The electromagnetic signal generators use an antenna to interrogate the RFIDT's for desired information associated with a corresponding pipe or drilling component.

72. The electromagnetic signal 85 is communicated to an RFIDT that responds to the transmitted electromagnetic signal by returning data or information 86 in an electromagnetic signal form that is received by one of the antennas, and subsequently communicated to a reader 87 which may subsequently process or simply store electromagnetic signal 86. The reader 87 may be handheld, i.e. mobile, or fixed according to particular needs.

73. The RFIDT's 69 and 71 may be passive (e.g. requiring

minimal incident power, for example power density in the approximate range of 15-25 mW/cm²) in order to establish a communications link between an antenna and the RFIDT. "Passive" refers to an identification tag not requiring a battery or any other power source in order to function and to deriving requisite power to transmit an electromagnetic signal from an incoming electromagnetic signal it receives via an antenna. Alternatively, an RFIDT (as may any in any embodiment herein) may include a battery or other suitable power source that would enable an RFIDT to communicate an electromagnetic signal response 86.

74. Antennas are coupled to reader 87 by any suitable wiring configuration, or alternatively, the two elements may communicate using any other appropriate wireless apparatus and protocol. The reader 87 is coupled to a control system which in one aspect is a computer (or computers) 88 which may include a monitor display and/or printing capabilities for the user. Computer 88 may be optionally coupled to a handheld reader 89 to be used on the rig or remote therefrom. Computer 88 may also be connected to a manual keyboard 89a or similar input device permitting user entry into computer 88 of items such as drill pipe identity, drill string serial numbers, physical information (such as size, drilling component lengths, weight, age, etc.) well bore inclination, depth intervals, number of drill pipes in the drill string, and suspended loads or weights, for example.

75. The computer 88 may be coupled to a series of interfaces 90 that may include one or more sensors capable of indicating any number of elements associated with drill rig derrick 83, such as: a block travel characteristic 90a, a rotation counter characteristic 90b, a drill string weight 90c, a heave compensator 90d, and a blowout preventer (BOP) distance sensor 90e. A micro-controller may include one or more of these sensors or any other additional information as described in U.S. Application Ser. No. 09/906,957. The control system may be or may include a microprocessor based system and/or one or more programmable logic

controllers.

76. A drill pipe 66 with an RFIDT 69 and an RFIDT 71 provides a redundancy feature for identification of the drill pipe 66 so that, in the event one of the RFIDT's fails, the other one which has not failed can still be used to identify the particular drill pipe. This is useful, e.g. when the RFIDT 71, which has relatively more exposure to down hole conditions, fails. Then the RFIDT 69 can still be used to identify the particular piece of drill pipe. It is within the scope of the present invention for any item according to the present invention to have two (or more RFIDT's like the RFIDT 69 and the RFIDT 71.

77. Figs. 5A - 5D present improvements according to the present invention of prior art systems and apparatuses in U.S. Patent 6,480,811 B2 issued Nov. 12, 2002 (incorporated fully herein for all purposes). Fig. 5B shows schematically and partially a drill pipe 91 with an RFIDT 92 (like the identifier assemblies 12, U.S. Patent 6,604,063 B2 or like any RFIDT disclosed herein and with an RFIDT 99, (as any RFIDT disclosed herein in a drill pipe's pin end). It is within the scope of the present invention to provide any oilfield equipment disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,604,063 B2 with two (or more) RFIDT's (e.g., one in an end and one in a side, e.g. like those shown in Fig. 5B).

78. Figs. 5A, 5C and 5D show an oilfield equipment identifying apparatus 100 according to the present invention for use with pipe or equipment as in Fig. 5B with two (or more) RFIDT's on respective pieces 114 of oilfield equipment. The RFIDT's may be any disclosed or referred to herein and those not mounted in a recess according to the present invention may be as disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,480,811 B2 indicated by the reference numerals 112a and 112b on pieces of equipment 114a and 114b with RFIDT's in recesses according to the present invention shown schematically and indicated by reference numerals 109a, 109b. Each of the identifier assemblies 112 and RFIDT's like 109a, 109b are capable of transmitting a unique identification code for each piece of pipe or

oilfield equipment.

79. The oilfield equipment identifying apparatus 100 with a reader 118 is capable of reading each of the identifier assemblies and RFIDT's. The reader 118 includes a hand-held wand 120, which communicates with a portable computer 122 via a signal path 124. In one embodiment, each identifier assembly 112 includes a passive circuit as described in detail in U.S. Patent No. 5,142,128 (fully incorporated herein for all purposes) and the reader 118 can be constructed and operated in a manner as set forth in said patent or may be any other reader or reader system disclosed or referred to herein.

80. In use, the wand 120 of the reader 118 is positioned near a particular one of the identifier assemblies 112 or RFIDT's. A unique identification code is transmitted from the identifier assembly or RFIDT to the wand 120 via a signal path 126 which can be an airwave communication system. Upon receipt of the unique identification code, the wand 120 transmits the unique identification code to the portable computer 122 via the signal path 124. The portable computer 122 receives the unique identification code transmitted by the wand 120 and then decodes the unique identification code, identifying a particular one of the identifier assemblies 112 or RFIDT's and then transmitting (optionally in real time or in batch mode) the code to a central computer (or computers) 132 via a signal path 134. The signal path 134 can be a cable or airwave transmission system.

81. Fig. 5C shows an embodiment of an oilfield equipment identifying apparatus 100a according to the present invention which includes a plurality of the identifier assemblies 112 and/or RFIDT's 109 which are mounted on respective pieces 114 of pipe or oilfield equipment as described above. The oilfield equipment identifying apparatus includes a reader 152, which communicates with the central computer 132. The central computer 132 contains an oilfield equipment database (which in certain aspects, can function as the oilfield equipment database set forth in U.S.

Patent 5,142,128). In one aspect the oilfield equipment database in the central computer 132 may function as described in U.S. Patent 5,142,128. In one aspect the oilfield equipment identifying apparatus 100a is utilized in reading the identifier assemblies 112 (and/or RFIDT's 109) on various pieces 114 of pipe or oilfield equipment located on a rig floor 151 of an oil drilling rig.

82. The reader 152 includes a hand-held wand 156 (but a fixed reader apparatus may be used). The hand-held wand 156 is constructed in a similar manner as the hand-held wand 120 described above. The wand 156 may be manually operable and individually mobile. The hand-held wand 156 is attached to a storage box 158 via a signal path 160, which may be a cable having a desired length. Storage box 158 is positioned on the rig floor 151 and serves as a receptacle to receive the hand-held wand 156 and the signal path 160 when the hand-held wand 156 is not in use.

83. An electronic conversion package 162 communicates with a connector on the storage box 158 via signal path 164, which may be an airway or a cable communication system so that the electronic conversion package 162 receives the signals indicative of the identification code stored in the identifier assemblies 112 and/or RFIDT's, which are read by the hand-held wand 156. In response to receiving such signal, the electronic conversion package 162 converts the signal into a format which can be communicated an appreciable distance therefrom. The converted signal is then output by the electronic conversion package 162 to a buss 166 via a signal path 168. The buss 166, which is connected to a drilling rig local area network and/or a programmable logic controller (not shown) in a well-known manner, receives the converted signal output by the electronic conversion package 162.

84. The central computer 132 includes an interface unit 170. The interface 170 communicates with the central computer 132 via a signal path 172 or other serial device, or a parallel port. The interface unit 170 may also communicate with the buss 166 via a signal path 173. The interface unit 170 receives the signal, which

is indicative of the unique identification codes and/or information read by the hand-held wand 156, from the buss 166, and a signal from a drilling monitoring device 174 via a signal path 176. The drilling monitoring device 174 communicates with at least a portion of a drilling device 178 (Fig. 5D) via a signal path 179. The drilling device 178 can be supported by the rig floor 151, or by the drilling rig. The drilling device 178 can be any drilling device which is utilized to turn pieces 114 of oilfield equipment, such as drill pipe, casing (in casing drilling operations) or a drill bit to drill a well bore. For example, but not by way of limitation, the drilling device 178 can be a rotary table supported by the rig floor 151, or a top mounted drive ("top drive") supported by the drilling rig, or a downhole mud motor suspended by the drill string and supported by the drilling rig. Optionally, the drilling device 178 has at least one RFIDT 178a therein or thereon and an RFIDT reader 178b therein or thereon. The RFIDT reader 178a is interconnected with the other systems as is the reader 152, e.g. via the signal path 173 as indicated by the dotted line 173a.

85. The drilling monitoring device 174 monitors the drilling device 178 so as to determine when the piece 114 or pieces 114 of oilfield equipment in the drill string are in a rotating condition or a non-rotating condition. The drilling monitoring device 174 outputs a signal to the interface unit 170 via the signal path 176, the signal being indicative of whether the piece(s) 114 of oilfield equipment are in the rotating or the non-rotating condition. The central computer 132 may be loaded with a pipe and identification program in its oilfield equipment database which receives and automatically utilizes the signal received by the interface unit 170 from the signal path 176 to monitor, on an individualized basis, the rotating and non-rotating hours of each piece 114 of oilfield equipment in the drill string.

86. For example, when the drilling device 178 is a downhole mud motor (which selectively rotates the drill string's drill bit while the drill string's pipe remains stationary), the central

computer 132 logs the non-rotating usage of each piece 114 of the drill string's pipe. In the case where the drilling device 178 is the downhole mud motor, the central computer 132 has stored therein a reference indicating that the drilling device 178 is the downhole mud motor so that the central computer 132 accurately logs the non-rotating usage of each piece 114 of oilfield equipment included in the drill string that suspends the drilling device 178.

87. Fig. 5D shows a system 250 according to the present invention for rotating pieces of drill pipe 114 which have at least one identifier assembly 112 and/or one RFIDT in a pin end (or box end, or both) recess according to the present invention to connect a pin connection 252 of the piece 114 to a box connection 254 of an adjacently disposed piece 114 in a well known manner. Each piece 114 may have an RFIDT in its pin end and/or box end. The system 250 includes a reader system 250a (shown schematically) for reading the RFIDT in the pin end recess prior to makeup of a joint. The apparatus 250 can be, for example, but not by way of limitation, an Iron Roughneck, an ST-80 Iron Roughneck, or an AR 5000 Automated Iron Roughneck from Varco International and/or apparatus as disclosed in U.S. Patents 4,603,464; 4,348,920; and 4,765,401. The reader system 250a may be located at any appropriate location on or in the apparatus 250.

88. The apparatus 250 is supported on wheels 256 which engage tracks (not shown) positioned on the rig floor 151 for moving the apparatus 250 towards and away from the well bore. Formed on an upper end of the apparatus 250 is a pipe spinner assembly 258 (or tong or rotating device) for selectively engaging and turning the piece 114 to connect the pin connection 252 to the box connection 254. Optionally the assembly 258 has an RFIDT reader 258a. An optional funnel-shaped mudguard 260 can be disposed below the pipe spinner assembly 258. The mudguard 260 defines a mudguard bore 262, which is sized and adapted so as to receive the piece 114 of oilfield equipment therethrough. The apparatus 250 also may include a tong or a torque assembly or torque wrench 263 disposed

below the pipe spinner assembly 258. An opening 264 is formed through the mudguard 260 and communicates with a mudguard bore 262. Optionally an oilfield equipment identifying apparatus 110 includes a fixed mount reader 266 for automating the reading of the RFIDT's and of the identifier assemblies 112, rather than the hand-held wand 156. In one embodiment a flange 268 is located substantially adjacent to the opening 264 so as to position the fixed mount reader 266 through the opening 264 whereby the fixed mount reader 266 is located adjacent to the piece 114 of oilfield equipment when the piece 114 of oilfield equipment is moved and is being spun by the pipe spinner assembly 258. The reader(s) of the apparatus 250 are interconnected with an in communication with suitable control apparatus, e.g. as any disclosed herein. In certain aspects, the fixed mount reader 266 can be located on the apparatus 250 below the pipe spinner assembly 258 and above the torque assembly or torque wrench 263, or within or on the spinner assembly 258; or within or on the torque wrench 263.

89. The prior art discloses a variety of tubular members including, but not limited to casing, pipe, risers, and tubing, around which are emplaced a variety of encompassing items, e.g., but not limited to centralizers, stabilizers, and buoyant members. According to the present invention these items are provided with one or more RFIDT's with antenna(s) within and encircling the item and with a body or relatively massive part thereof protecting the RFIDT. Fig. 6 shows schematically a tubular member 190 with an encompassing item 192 having therein an RFIDT 194 (like any disclosed or referred to herein as may be the case for all RFIDT's mentioned herein) with an IC (integrated circuit) or microchip 196 to which is attached an antenna 198 which encircles the tubular member 190 (which is generally cylindrical and hollow with a flow channel therethrough from one end to the other or which is solid) and with which the IC 196 can be energized for reading and/or for writing thereto. In one aspect the RFIDT 194 is located midway between exterior and interior surfaces of the encompassing item

192; while in other aspects it is nearer to one or these surfaces than the other. The encompassing item may be made of any material mentioned or referred to herein. The RFIDT 194 is shown midway between a top and a bottom (as viewed in Fig. 6) of the encompassing item 192; but it is within the scope of this invention to locate the RFIDT at any desired level of the encompassing item 192. Although the encompassing item 192 is shown with generally uniform dimensions, it is within the scope of the present invention for the encompassing item to have one or more portions thicker than others; and, in one particular aspect, the RFIDT (or the IC 196 or the antenna 198) is located in the thicker portion(s). In certain particular aspects the encompassing item is a centralizer, stabilizer, or protector.

90. Fig. 7A shows a buoyant drill pipe 200 which is similar to such pipes as disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,443,244 (incorporated fully herein for all purposes), but which, as shown in Fig. 7A, has improvements according to the present invention. The drill pipe 200 has a pin end 202 and a box end 204 at ends of a hollow tubular body 206 having a flow channel (not shown) therethrough. A buoyant element 210 encompasses the tubular body 206. Within the buoyant element 210 is at least one RFIDT 208 which may be like and be located as the RFIDT 198, Fig. 6. As shown in Fig. 7B, in one aspect the buoyant member 210 has two halves which are emplaced around the tubular body 206 and then secured together. In such an embodiment either one or both ends of an antenna 201 are releasably connectible to an IC 203 of an RFIDT 208 or two parts of the antenna 201 itself are releasably connectible. As shown in Fig. 7B, antenna parts 201a and 201b are releasably connected together, e.g. with connector apparatus 201c, and an end of the antenna part 201b is releasably connected to the IC 203. Alternatively an optional location provides an RFIDT that is entirely within one half of the buoyant member 210, e.g. like the optional RFIDT 208a shown in Fig. 7A. The pin end 202 may have any RFIDT therein and/or cap ring according to the present invention as disclosed

herein. The two halves of the buoyant member may be held together by adhesive, any known suitable locking mechanism, or any known suitable latch mechanism (as may be any two part ring or item herein according to the present invention).

5 91. It is within the scope of the present invention to provide a stabilizer as is used in oil and gas wellbore operations with one or more RFIDT's. Figs. 8A and 8B show a stabilizer 220 according to the present invention which is like the stabilizers disclosed in U. S. Patent 4,384,626 (incorporated fully herein for
10 all purposes) but which has improvements according to the present invention. An RFIDT 222 (like any disclosed or referred to herein) is embedded within a stabilizer body 224 with an IC 223 in a relatively thicker portion 221 of the body 224 and an antenna 225 that is within and encircles part of the body 224. Parts 225a and
15 225b of the antenna 225 are connected together with a connector 226. The stabilizer 220 may, optionally, have a recess at either end with an RFIDT therein as described herein according to the present invention. Optionally, the stabilizer 220 may have one or more RFIDT's located as are the RFIDT's in Figs. 6 and 7A.

20 92. Various stabilizers have a tubular body that is interposed between other tubular members, a body which is not clamped on around an existing tubular members. According to the present invention such stabilizers may have one or more RFIDT's as disclosed herein; and, in certain aspects, have an RFIDT located as
25 are the RFIDT's in Figs. 6, 7A or 8A and/or an RFIDT in an end recess (e.g. pin end and/or box end) as described herein according to the present invention. Figs. 8C and 8D show a stabilizer 230 according to the present invention which has a tubular body 231 and a plurality of rollers 232 rotatably mounted to the body 231 (as in
30 the stabilizer of U.S. Patent 4,071,285, incorporated fully herein, and of which the stabilizer 230 is an improvement according to the present invention). An RFIDT 233 with an IC 234 and an antenna 235 is disposed within one or the rollers 232. The stabilizer 230 has a pin end 236 and a box end 237 which permit it to be threadedly

connected to tubulars at either of its ends. A recess may, according to the present invention, be provided in the pin end 236 and/or the box end 237 and an RFIDT and/or cap ring used therewith as described herein according to the present invention. The
5 antenna 235 is within and encircles part of the roller 232.

93. It is within the scope of the present invention to provide a centralizer with one or more RFIDT's as disclosed herein. A centralizer 240, Fig. 8E, is like the centralizers disclosed in U.S. Patent 5,095,981 (incorporated fully herein), but with
10 improvements according to the present invention. Figs. 8E and 8F show the centralizer 240 on a tubular TR with a hollow body 241 with a plurality of spaced-apart ribs 242 projecting outwardly from the body 241. A plurality of screws 244 releasably secure the body 241 around the tubular TR. An RFIDT 245 with an IC 246 and an
15 antenna 247 is located within the body 241. Optionally a plug 241a (or filler material) seals off a recess 241b in which the IC 246 is located.

94. Figs. 8G and 8H show a centralizer 270 according to the present invention which is like centralizers (or stabilizers)
20 disclosed in U.S. Patent 4,984,633 (incorporated fully herein for all purposes), but which has improvements according to the present invention. The centralizer 270 has a hollow tubular body 271 with a plurality of spaced-apart ribs 272 projecting outwardly therefrom. An RFIDT 273 with an IC 274 and an antenna 275 (dotted
25 circular line) is disposed within the body 271 with the IC 274 within one of the ribs 272 and the antenna 275 within and encircling part of the body 271.

95. Often thread protectors are used at the threaded ends of tubular members to prevent damage to the threads. It is within the
30 scope of the present invention to provide a thread protector, either a threaded thread protector or a non-threaded thread protector, with one or more RFIDT's as disclosed herein. Figs. 9A, 10A, and 11 show examples of such thread protectors.

96. Figs. 9A and 9B and 10A and 10B show thread protectors

like those disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,367,508 (incorporated fully herein), but with improvements according to the present invention. 97.

5 A thread protector 280, Fig. 9A, according to the present invention protecting threads of a pin end of a tubular TB has an RFIDT 283 within a body 282. The RFIDT 283 has an IC 284 and an antenna 285. A thread protector 281, Fig. 9B, according to the present invention protecting threads of a box end of a tubular TL has a body 286 and an RFIDT 287 with an IC 288 and an antenna 298 within the body 286. Both the bodies 282 and 286 are generally cylindrical and both antennas 285 and 298 encircle a part of their respective bodies. Optionally the thread protector 281 has an RFIDT 287a within a recess 286a of the body 286. The RFIDT 287a has an IC 288a and an antenna 289a. Optionally, any thread protector herein may be provided with a recess according to the present invention as described herein with an RFIDT and/or torus and/or cap ring according to the present invention (as may any item according to the present invention as in Figs. 6 - 8G).

10 98. Figs. 10A and 10B show a thread protector 300 according to the present invention which is like thread protectors disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,367,508 B1 (incorporated fully herein), but with improvements according to the present invention. The thread protector 300 for protecting a box end of a tubular TU has a body 302 with upper opposed spaced-apart sidewalls 303a, 303b. An RFIDT 304 with an IC 305 and an antenna 306 is disposed between portions of the two sidewalls 303a, 303b. Optionally, an amount of filler material 307 (or a cap ring as described above) is placed over the RFIDT 304. Optionally, or as an alternative, an RFIDT 304a is provided within the body 302 with an IC 305a and an antenna 306a. Optionally, or as an alternative, an RFIDT 304b is provided within the body 302 with an IC 305b and an antenna 306b.

15 25 30 99. A variety of prior art thread protectors have a strap or tightening apparatus which permits them to be selectively secured over threads of a tubular. Fig. 11 shows a thread protector 310 according to the present invention which is like the thread

protectors disclosed in U.S. Patent 5,148,835 (incorporated fully herein), but with improvements according to the present invention. The thread protector 310 has a body 312 with two ends 312a and 312b. A strap apparatus 313 with a selectively lockable closure mechanism 314 permits the thread protector 310 to be installed on threads of a tubular member. An RFIDT 315 with an IC 316 and an antenna 317 is disposed within the body 312. The antenna 317 may be connected or secured to, or part of, the strap apparatus 313 and activation of the lockable closure mechanism 314 may complete a circuit through the antenna. In one aspect the antenna has ends connected to metallic parts 318, 319 and the antenna is operational when these parts are in contact. The bodies of any thread protector according to the present invention may be made of any material referred to herein, including, but not limited to, any metal or plastic referred to herein or in the patents incorporated by reference herein.

100. Fig. 12A shows a system 400 according to the present invention which has a rig 410 that includes a vertical derrick or mast 412 having a crown block 414 at its upper end and a horizontal rig floor 416 at its lower end. Drill line 418 is fixed to deadline anchor 420, which is commonly provided with hook load sensor 421, and extends upwardly to crown block 414 having a plurality of sheaves (not shown). From block 414, drill line 418 extends downwardly to traveling block 422 that similarly includes a plurality of sheaves (not shown). Drill line 418 extends back and forth between the sheaves of crown block 414 and the sheaves of traveling block 422, then extends downwardly from crown block 414 to drawworks 424 having rotating drum 426 upon which drill line 418 is wrapped in layers. The rotation of drum 426 causes drill line 418 to be taken in or out, which raises or lowers traveling block 422 as required. Drawworks 424 may be provided with a sensor 427 which monitors the rotation of drum 426. Alternatively, sensor 427 may be located in crown block 414 to monitor the rotation of one or more of the sheaves therein. Hook 428 and any elevator 430 is

attached to traveling block 422. Hook 428 is used to attach kelly 432 to traveling block 422 during drilling operations, and elevators 430 are used to attach drill string 434 to traveling block 422 during tripping operations. Shown schematically the
5 elevator 430 has an RFIDT reader 431 (which may be any reader disclosed or referred to herein and which is interconnected with and in communication with suitable control apparatus, e.g. as any disclosed herein, as is the case for reader 439 and a reader 444.

Drill string 434 is made up of a plurality of individual drill
10 pipe pieces, a grouping of which are typically stored within mast 412 as joints 435 (singles, doubles, or triples) in a pipe rack. Drill string 434 extends down into wellbore 436 and terminates at its lower end with bottom hole assembly (BHA) 437 that typically includes a drill bit, several heavy drilling collars, and
15 instrumentation devices commonly referred to as measurement-while-drilling (MWD) or logging-while-drilling (LWD) tools. A mouse hole 438, which may have a spring at the bottom thereof, extends through and below rig floor 416 and serves the purpose of storing next pipe 440 to be attached to the drill string
20 434. With drill pipe according to the present invention having an RFIDT 448 in a pin end 442, an RFIDT reader apparatus 439 at the bottom of the mouse hole 438 can energize an antenna of the RFIDT 448 and identify the drill pipe 440. Optionally, if the drill pipe 440 has an RFIDT in a box end 443, an RFIDT reader apparatus can
25 energize an antenna in the RFIDT 446 and identify the drill pipe 440. Optionally, the drill bit 437 has at least one RFIDT 437a (shown schematically).

101. During a drilling operation, power rotating means (not shown) rotates a rotary table (not shown) having rotary bushing 442
30 releasably attached thereto located on rig floor 416. Kelly 432, which passes through rotary bushing 442 and is free to move vertically therein, is rotated by the rotary table and rotates drill string 434 and BHA 437 attached thereto. During the drilling operation, after kelly 432 has reached its lowest point commonly

referred to as the "kelly down" position, the new drill pipe 440 in the mouse hole 438 is added to the drill string 434 by reeling in drill line 418 onto rotating drum 426 until traveling block 422 raises kelly 432 and the top portion of drill string 434 above rig floor 416. Slips 445, which may be manual or hydraulic, are placed around the top portion of drill string 434 and into the rotary table such that a slight lowering of traveling block 422 causes slips 444 to be firmly wedged between drill string 434 and the rotary table. At this time, drill string 434 is "in-slips" since its weight is supported thereby as opposed to when the weight is supported by traveling block 422, or "out-of-slips". Once drill string 434 is in-slips, kelly 432 is disconnected from string 434 and moved over to and secured to new pipe 440 in mouse hole 438. New pipe 440 is then hoisted out of mouse hole 438 by raising travelling block 422, and attached to drill string 434. Traveling block 422 is then slightly raised which allows slips 445 to be removed from the rotary table. Traveling block 422 is then lowered and drilling resumed. "Tripping-out" is the process where some or all of drill string 434 is removed from wellbore 436. In a trip-out, kelly 432 is disconnected from drill string 434, set aside, and detached from hook 428. Elevators 430 are then lowered and used to grasp the uppermost pipe of drill string 434 extending above rig floor 416. Drawworks 424 reel in drill line 418 which hoists drill string 434 until the section of drill string 434 (usually a "triple") to be removed is suspended above rig floor 416. String 434 is then placed in-slips, and the section removed and stored in the pipe rack. "Tripping-in" is the process where some or all of drill string 434 is replaced in wellbore 436 and is basically the opposite of tripping out. In some drilling rigs, rotating the drill string is accomplished by a device commonly referred to as a "top drive" (not shown). This device is fixed to hook 428 and replaces kelly 432, rotary bushing 442, and the rotary table. Pipe added to drill string 434 is connected to the bottom of the top drive. As with rotary table drives, additional pipe may

either come from mouse hole 438 in singles, or from the pipe racks as singles, doubles, or triples. Optionally, drilling is accomplished with a downhole motor system 434a which has at least one RFIDT 434b (shown schematically in Fig. 12A).

5 102. As shown in Fig. 12B, the reader apparatus 439 is in communication with a control apparatus 449 (e.g. any computerized or PLC system referred to or disclosed herein) which selectively controls the reader apparatus 439, receives signals from it and, in certain aspects, processes those signals and transmits them to
10 other computing and/or control apparatus. Similarly when the optional reader apparatus 444 is used, it also is in communication with the control apparatus 449 and is controlled thereby. With a reader at the pin end and a reader at the box end, the length of the piece of drill pipe be determined and/or its passage beyond a
15 certain point. In one aspect the reader apparatus 439 is deleted and the reader apparatus 444 reads the RFIDT (or RFIDT's) in the drill pipe 440 as the drill pipe 440 passes by the reader apparatus 444 as the drill pipe 440 is either lowered into the mouse hole 438 or raised out of it. The reader apparatus 444 may be located on or
20 underneath the rig floor 416. It is within the scope of the present invention to use a reader apparatus 439 and/or a reader apparatus 444 in association with any system's mouse hole or rat hole (e.g., but not limited to, systems as disclosed in U.S. Patents 5,107,705; 4,610,315; and in the prior art cited therein),
25 and with so-called "mouse hole sleeves" and mouse hole scabbards" as disclosed in, e.g. U.S. Patents 5,351,767; 4,834,604; and in the prior art references cited in these two patents. With respect to the drilling operation depicted in Fig. 12A (and, any drilling operation referred to herein according to the present invention)
30 the drilling may be "casing drilling" and the drill pipe can be casing.

103. Figs. 13A and 13B show a system 450 according to the present invention which has a mouse hole 451 associated with a rig 452 (shown partially). The mouse hole 451 includes a mouse hole

scabbard 454 (shown schematically, e.g. like the one in U.S. Patent 4,834,604, but with improvements according to the present invention). The mouse hole scabbard 454 includes an RFIDT reader apparatus 456 (like any such apparatus described or referred to herein) with connection apparatus 458 via which a line or cable 459 connects the reader apparatus 456 to control apparatus 455 (shown schematically, like any described or referred to herein). It is within the scope of the present invention to provide, optionally, reader apparatuses (E.G. other than adjacent the pipe or adjacent a mouse hole, or tubular preparation hole) 453 and/or 459 on the rig 452. Optionally, one or more antenna energizers are provided on a rig and reader apparatuses are located elsewhere. According to the present invention a scabbard can be made of nonmagnetic metal, plastic, polytetrafluoroethylene, fiberglass or composite to facilitate energizing of an RFIDT's antenna of an RFIDT located within the scabbard. Optionally a scabbard may be tapered to prevent a pipe end from contacting or damaging the reader apparatus 456 and/or, as shown in Fig. 13B, stops 454a may be provided to achieve this.

104. Various prior art systems employ apparatuses known as "powered mouse holes" or "rotating mouse hole tools". It is within the scope of the present invention to improve such systems with an RFIDT reader apparatus for identifying a tubular within the powered mouse hole. Figs. 14A - 14C show a system 460 according to the present invention which includes a rig system 461 and a powered mouse hole 462. The powered mouse hole 462 is like the powered mouse hole disclosed in U.S. Patent 5,351,767 (incorporated fully herein for all purposes) with the addition of an RFIDT reader apparatus. The powered mouse hole 462 has a receptacle 463 for receiving an end of a tubular member. An RFIDT reader apparatus 464 is located at the bottom of the receptacle 463 (which may be like any RFIDT reader apparatus disclosed or referred to herein). A line or cable 465 connects the RFIDT reader apparatus 464 to control apparatus (not shown; like any disclosed or referred to

herein). Optionally as shown in Fig. 14B, an RFIDT reader apparatus 466 in communication with control apparatus 467 is located adjacent the top of the receptacle 463.

105. Fig. 14D shows a rotating mouse hole tool 470 which is like the PHANTOM MOUSE [™] tool commercially-available from Varco International (and which is co-owned with the present invention), but the tool 470 has an upper ring 471 on a circular receptacle 473 (like the receptacle 463, Fig. 14C). The upper ring 471 has an energizing antenna 472 for energizing an RFIDT in an end of a tubular placed into the receptacle 473. The antenna 472 encircles the top of the receptacle 473. The antenna 472 is connected to reader apparatus 474 (like any disclosed or referred to herein) which may be mounted on the tool 470 or adjacent thereto.

106. The prior art discloses a wide variety of top drive units (see, e.g., U.S. Patents 4,421,179; 4,529,045; 6,257,349; 6,024,181; 5,921,329; 5,794,723; 5,755,296; 5,501,286; 5,388,651; 5,368,112; and 5,107,940 and the references cited therein). The present invention discloses improved top drives which have one, two, or more RFIDT readers and/or antenna energizers. It is within the scope of the present invention to locate an RFIDT reader and/or antenna energizer at any convenient place on a top drive from which an RFIDT in a tubular can be energized and/or read and/or written to. Such locations are, in certain aspects, at a point past which a tubular or a part thereof with an RFIDT moves. Figs. 15A and 15B show a top drive system 500 according to the present invention which is like the top drives of U.S. Patent 6,679,333 (incorporated fully herein), but with an RFIDT reader 501 located within a top drive assembly portion 502. The reader 501 is located for reading an RFIDT 503 in a tubular 504 which is being held within the top drive assembly portion 502. Alternatively, or in addition to the reader 501, an RFIDT reader 507 is located in a gripper section 505 which can energize and read the RFIDT 503 as the gripper section moves into the tubular 504. In particular aspects, the tubular is a piece of drill pipe or a piece of casing. Appropriate cables or

lines 508, 509, respectively connect the readers 501, 507 to control apparatus (not shown, as any described or referred to herein).

107. It is within the scope of the present invention to provide a cementing plug (or pipeline pig) with one or more RFIDT's with an antenna that encircles a generally circular part or portion of the plug or pig and with an IC embedded in a body part of the plug or pig and/or with an IC and/or antenna in a recess (as any recess described or referred to herein). Fig. 16A shows a cementing plug 510 according to the present invention with a generally cylindrical body 512 and exterior wipers 513 (there may be any desired number of wipers). An RFIDT 514 is encased in the body 512. An antenna 515 encircles part of the body 512. The body 512 (as may be any plug according to the present invention) may be made of any known material used for plugs, as may be the wipers 513. An IC 516 of the RFIDT 514 is like any IC disclosed or referred to herein. Optionally a cap ring (not shown) may be used over the recess 515 as may be filler material within the recess.

108. Fig. 16B shows a cementing plug 520 according to the present invention which has a generally cylindrical body 522 with a bore 523 therethrough from top to bottom. A plurality of wipers 524 are on the exterior of the body 522. An RFIDT 525 has an IC 526 encased in the body 522 and an antenna 527 that encircles part of the body 522. Both antennas 515 and 527 are circular as viewed from above and extend around and within the entire circumference of their respective bodies. It is within the scope of the present invention to have the RFIDT 514 and/or the RFIDT 525 within recesses in their respective bodies (as any recess disclosed herein or referred to herein) with or without a cap ring or filler.

109. Figs. 17A - 17D show a portable ring 530 which has a flexible body 532 made, e.g. from rubber, plastic, fiberglass, and/or composite which has two ends 531a, 531b. The end 531a has a recess 536 sized and configured for receiving and holding with a friction fit a correspondingly sized and configured pin 533

projecting out from the end 531b. The two ends 531a, 531b may be held together with any suitable locking mechanism, latch apparatus, and/or adhesive. As shown, each end 531a, 531b has a piece of releasably cooperating hook-and-loop fastener material 534a, 534b, respectively thereon (e.g. VELCRO™ material) and a corresponding piece of such material 535 is releasably connected to the pieces 534a, 534b (Fig. 17C) to hold the two ends 531a, 531b together. The body 532 encases an RFIDT 537 which has an IC 538 and an antenna 539. Ends of the antenna 539 meet at the projection 533 - recess 536 interface and/or the projection 533 is made of antenna material and the recess 536 is lined with such material which is connected to an antenna end. Optionally, as shown in Fig. 17D the ring 530 may include one or more (one shown) protective layers 532a, e.g. made of a durable material, e.g., but not limited to metal, KEVLAR™ material or ARAMID™ material. A hole 532b formed when the two ends 531a, 531b are connected together can be any desired size to accommodate any item or tubular to be encompassed by the ring 530. The ring 530 may have one, two or more RFIDT's therein one or both of which are read-only; or one or both of which are read-write. Such a ring may be releasably emplaceable around a member, e.g., but not limited to, a solid or hollow generally cylindrical member. Any ring or torus herein according to the present invention may have an RFIDT with an antenna that has any desired number of loops (e.g., but not limited to, five, ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty or fifty loops), as may be the case with any antenna of any RFIDT in any embodiment disclosed herein.

110. Fig. 17E shows a portable ring 530a, like the ring 530 but without two separable ends. The ring 530a has a body 530b made of either rigid or flexible material and with a center opening 530f so it is releasably emplaceable around another member. An RFIDT 530c within the body 530b has an IC 530e and an antenna 530d.

111. It is within the scope of the present invention to provide a whipstock with one or more RFIDT's with an RFIDT circular antenna that encircles a generally circular part of a generally

cylindrical part of a whipstock. Figs. 18A and 18B show a whipstock 540 like a whipstock disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,105,675 (incorporated fully herein for all purposes), but with an RFIDT 541 in a lower part 542 of the whipstock 540. The RFIDT 541 has an antenna 543 and an IC 544 (each like any as disclosed or referred to herein).

112. An RFIDT 551 (as any disclosed herein) may, according to the present invention, be provided in a generally cylindrical part of a mill or milling tool used in downhole milling operations. Also with respect to certain mills that have a tubular portion, one or both ends of such a mill may have one or more RFIDT's therein according to the present invention. Fig. 19 shows a mill 550 which is like the mill disclosed in U.S. Patent 5,620,051 (incorporated fully herein), but with an RFIDT 551 in a threaded pin end 552 of a body 553 of the mill 550. The RFIDT 551 may be emplaced and/or mounted in the pin end 552 as is any similar RFIDT disclosed herein. Optionally an RFIDT may be emplaced within a milling section 554.

113. The prior art discloses a variety of pipe handlers and pipe manipulators, some with gripping mechanisms for gripping pipe. It is within the scope of the present invention to provide a pipe handler with an RFIDT reader for reading an RFIDT in a tubular member which is located in one of the embodiments of the present invention as described herein. Often an end of a tubular is near, adjacent, or passing by a part of a pipe handler. An RFIDT in a tubular according to the present invention can be sensed by an RFIDT reader apparatus and a signal can be transmitted therefrom to control apparatus regarding the tubular's identity or other information stored in the RFIDT. Figs. 20A and 20B show pipe manipulators 560 and 570 [which are like pipe manipulators disclosed in U.S. Patent 4,077,525 (incorporated fully herein), but with improvements according to the present invention] which have movable arms 561, 562, (pipe manipulator 560) and movable arm 571 (pipe manipulator 570). Each manipulator has a pipe gripper 563,

573. Each manipulator has an RFIDT reader apparatus - apparatus 565 on manipulator 560 and apparatus 575 on manipulator 570. Optionally, such a reader apparatus is located on a gripper mechanism.

5 114. Fig. 21 shows a tubular inspection system 600 [which may be any known tubular inspection system, including those which move with respect to a tubular and those with respect to which a tubular moves, including, but not limited to those disclosed in U.S. Patents 6,622,561; 6,578,422; 5,534,775; 5,043,663; 5,030,911; 10 4,792,756; 4,710,712; 4,636,727; 4,629,985; 4,718,277; 5,914,596; 5,585,565; 5,600,069; 5,303,592; 5,291,272; and Int'l Patent Application WO 98/16842 published Apr. 23, 1998 and in the references cited therein] which is used to inspect a tubular 610 (e.g., but not limited to pipe, casing, tubing, collar) which has at least one RFIDT 602 with an IC 604 and an antenna 606. The 15 tubular 610 may be any tubular disclosed herein and it may have any RFIDT, RFIDT's, recess, recesses, cap ring, and/or sensible material and/or indicia disclosed herein.

115. Fig. 22 shows schematically a method 620 for making a 20 tubular member according to the present invention. A tubular body is made - "MAKE TUBULAR BODY" - using any suitable known process for making a tubular body, including, but not limited to, known methods for making pipe, drill pipe, casing, risers, and tubing. An end recess is formed - "FORM END RECESS" - in one or both ends 25 of the tubular member. An identification device is installed in the recess - "INSTALL ID DEVICE" (which may be any identification apparatus, device, torus ring or cap ring according to the present invention). Optionally, a protector is installed in the recess - "INSTALL PROTECTOR" (which may be any protector according to the 30 present invention).

116. Fig. 23 shows schematically a system 650 according to the present invention which is like the systems described in U.S. Patent 4,698,631 but which is for identifying an item 652 according to the present invention which has at least one end recess (as any

end recess disclosed herein) and/or within a ring or torus according to the present invention with at least one SAW tag identification apparatus 654 in the recess(es) and/or ring(s) or torus(es).

5 117. The system 650 (as systems in U.S. Patent 4,698,631) has an energizing antenna apparatus 656 connected to a reader 658 which provides radio frequency pulses or bursts which are beamed through the antenna apparatus 656 to the SAW tag identification apparatus 654. The reader 658 senses responsive signals from the apparatus
10 654. In one aspect the responsive signals are phase modulated in accord with code encoded in the apparatus 654. The reader 658 sends received signals to a computer interface unit 660 which processes the signals and sends them to a computer system 662.

118. It is within the scope of the present invention to
15 provide a blowout preventer according to the present invention with one or more wave energizable identification apparatuses, e.g. in a flange, side outlet, and/or door or bonnet or a blowout preventer. Fig. 24 shows a blowout preventer 670 according to the present invention which has a main body 672, a flow bore 674 therethrough
20 from top to bottom, a bottom flange 676, a top flange 678, a side outlet 682, and four ram-enclosing bonnets 680. An RFIDT 690 (like any disclosed herein) has an antenna 691 encircling and within the top flange 678 with an IC 692 connected thereto. An RFIDT 692 (like any disclosed herein) has an antenna 694 encircling and
25 within the bottom flange 676 with an IC 695. An RFIDT 696 (like any disclosed herein) has an antenna 697 encircling and within a bonnet 680 with an IC 698. An RFIDT 684 (like any disclosed herein) has an antenna 685 encircling and within a flange 689 of the side outlet 682, with an IC 686.

30 119. Any known wave energizable apparatus may be substituted for any RFIDT herein.

120. The present invention, therefore, in at least certain aspects, provides a member having a body, the body having at least

a portion thereof with a generally cylindrical portion, the generally cylindrical portion having a circumference, radio frequency identification apparatus with integrated circuit apparatus and antenna apparatus within the generally cylindrical portion of the body, and the antenna apparatus encircling the circumference of the cylindrical portion of the body. Such a member may include one or some (in any possible combination) of the following: the body having a first end spaced-apart from a second end, and the radio frequency identification apparatus positioned within the first end of the body; the first end of the body having a recess in the first end, and the radio frequency identification apparatus is within the recess; a protector in the recess covering the radio frequency identification apparatus; the body comprising a pipe; wherein the first end is a pin end of the pipe; wherein an end of the pipe has an exterior shoulder and the radio frequency identification apparatus is within the shoulder; wherein the second end is a box end of the pipe; wherein the first end is threaded externally and the second end is threaded internally; wherein the member is a piece of drill pipe with an externally threaded pin end spaced-apart from an internally threaded box end, and the body is generally cylindrical and hollow with a flow channel therethrough from the pin end to the box end, the pin end having a pin end portion with a pin end recess therearound, and the radio frequency identification apparatus within the pin end recess and the antenna apparatus encircling the pin end portion; wherein a protector in the pin end recess covers the radio frequency identification apparatus therein; wherein the protector is a cap ring within the pin end recess which covers the radio frequency identification apparatus; wherein the protector is an amount of protective material in the recess which covers the radio frequency identification apparatus; the member having a box end having a box end portion having a box end recess therein, a box end radio frequency identification apparatus within the box end recess, the box end radio frequency identification apparatus having antenna

apparatus and integrated circuit apparatus, the antenna encircling the box end portion; wherein a protector in the box end covers the radio frequency identification apparatus therein; wherein the recess has a cross-section shape from the group consisting of square, rectangular, semi-triangular, rhomboidal, triangular, trapezoidal, circular, and semi-circular; wherein the generally cylindrical portion is part of an item from the group consisting of pipe, drill pipe, casing, drill bit, tubing, stabilizer, centralizer, cementing plug, buoyant tubular, thread protector, downhole motor, whipstock, blowout preventer, mill, and torus; a piece of pipe with a pin end, the pin end having a recess therein, and sensible indicia in the recess; wherein the sensible indicia is from the group consisting of raised portions, indented portions, visually sensible indicia, spaced-apart indicia, numeral indicia, letter indicia, and colored indicia; the member including the body having a side wall with an exterior surface and a wall recess in the side wall, the wall recess extending inwardly from the exterior surface, and secondary radio frequency identification apparatus within the wall recess; and/or wherein the radio frequency identification apparatus is a plurality of radio frequency identification tag devices.

121. The present invention, therefore, in at least certain aspects, provides a tubular member with a body with a first end spaced-apart from a second end, the first end having a pin end having a pin end recess in the first end and identification apparatus in the pin end recess, and a protector in the pin end recess protecting the identification apparatus therein.

122. The present invention, therefore, in at least certain aspects, provides a method for sensing a radio frequency identification apparatus in a member, the member having a body, the body having at least a portion thereof with a generally cylindrical portion, the generally cylindrical portion having a circumference, wave energizable identification apparatus with antenna apparatus within the generally cylindrical portion of the body, and the

antenna apparatus encircling the circumference of the cylindrical portion of the body, the method including energizing the wave energizable identification apparatus by directing energizing energy to the antenna apparatus, the wave energizable identification apparatus upon being energized producing a signal, positioning the member adjacent sensing apparatus, and sensing with the sensing apparatus the signal produced by the wave energizable identification apparatus. Such a method may include one or some (in any possible combination) of the following: wherein the sensing apparatus is on an item from the group consisting of rig, elevator, spider, derrick, tubular handler, tubular manipulator, tubular rotator, top drive, mouse hole, powered mouse hole, or floor; wherein the sensing apparatus is in communication with and is controlled by computer apparatus [e.g. ibnlt, computer system(s), programmable logic controller(s) and/or microprocessor system(s)], the method further including controlling the sensing apparatus with the computer apparatus; wherein the energizing is effected by energizing apparatus in communication with and controlled by computer apparatus, the method further including controlling the energizing apparatus with the computer apparatus; wherein the signal is an identification signal identifying the member and the sensing apparatus produces and conveys a corresponding signal to computer apparatus, the computer apparatus including a programmable portion programmed to receive and analyze the corresponding signal, and the computer apparatus for producing an analysis signal indicative of accepting or rejecting the member based on said analysis, the method further including the wave energizable identification apparatus and producing an identification signal received by the sensing apparatus, the sensing apparatus producing a corresponding signal indicative of identification of the member and conveying the corresponding signal to the computer apparatus, and the computer apparatus analyzing the corresponding signal and producing the analysis signal; wherein the computer apparatus conveys the analysis signal to handling apparatus for handling the

member, the handling apparatus operable to accept or reject the member based on the analysis signal; wherein the member is a tubular member for use in well operations and the handling apparatus is a tubular member handling apparatus; wherein the tubular member handling apparatus is from the group consisting of tubular manipulator, tubular rotator, top drive, tong, spinner, downhole motor, elevator, spider, powered mouse hole, and pipe handler; wherein the handling apparatus has handling sensing apparatus thereon for sensing a signal from the wave energizable identification apparatus, and wherein the handling apparatus includes communication apparatus in communication with computer apparatus, the method further including sending a handling signal from the communication apparatus to the computer apparatus corresponding to the signal produced by the wave energizable identification apparatus; wherein the computer apparatus controls the handling apparatus; wherein the member is a tubular member and wherein the sensing apparatus is connected to and in communication with a tubular inspection system, the method further including conveying a secondary signal from the sensing apparatus to the tubular inspection system, the secondary signal corresponding to the signal produced by the wave energizable identification apparatus; and/or wherein the signal produced by the wave energizable identification apparatus identifies the tubular member.

123. The present invention, therefore, in at least certain aspects, provides a method for handling drill pipe on a drilling rig, the drill pipe comprising a plurality of pieces of drill pipe, each piece of drill pipe comprising a body with an externally threaded pin end spaced-apart from an internally threaded box end, the body having a flow channel therethrough from the pin end to the box end, radio frequency identification apparatus with integrated circuit apparatus and antenna apparatus within the pin end of the body, and the antenna apparatus encircling the pin end, the method including energizing the radio frequency identification apparatus by directing energizing energy to the antenna apparatus, the radio

frequency identification apparatus upon being energized producing a signal, positioning each piece of drill pipe adjacent sensing apparatus, and sensing with the sensing apparatus a signal produced by each piece of drill pipe's radio frequency identification apparatus. Such a method may include one or some (in any possible combination) of the following: wherein the sensing apparatus is in communication and is controlled by computer apparatus and wherein the radio frequency identification apparatus produces an identification signal receivable by the sensing apparatus, and wherein the sensing apparatus produces a corresponding signal indicative of the identification of the particular piece of drill pipe, the corresponding signal conveyable from the sensing apparatus to the computer apparatus, the method further including controlling the sensing apparatus with the computer apparatus; wherein the energizing is effected by energizing apparatus in communication with and controlled by computer apparatus, the method further including controlling the energizing apparatus with the computer apparatus; wherein the signal is an identification signal identifying the particular piece of drill pipe and the sensing apparatus conveys a corresponding signal to computer apparatus, the computer apparatus including a programmable portion programmed to receive and analyze the corresponding signal; and/or the computer apparatus for producing an analysis signal indicative of accepting or rejecting the particular piece of drill pipe based on said analysis, the method further including the computer apparatus analyzing the corresponding signal and producing the analysis signal, and the computer apparatus conveying the analysis signal to handling apparatus for handling the member, the handling apparatus operable to accept or reject the member based on the analysis signal.

124. The present invention, therefore, in at least certain aspects, provides a system for handling a tubular member, the system including handling apparatus, and a tubular member in contact with the handling apparatus, the tubular member with a body

with a first end spaced-apart from a second end, the first end being a pin end having a pin end recess in the first end and identification apparatus in the pin end recess, and a protector in the pin end recess protecting the identification apparatus therein; and such a system wherein the handling apparatus is from the group consisting of tubular manipulator, tubular rotator, top drive, tong, spinner, downhole motor, elevator, spider, powered mouse hole, and pipe handler.

125. The present invention, therefore, in at least certain aspects, provides a ring with a body with a central hole therethrough, the body having a generally circular shape, the body sized and configured for receipt within a circular recess in an end of a generally cylindrical member having a circumference, wave energizable identification apparatus within the body, the wave energizable identification apparatus having antenna apparatus, and the antenna apparatus extending around a portion of the body; and such a ring with sensible indicia on or in the body.

126. The present invention, therefore, in at least certain aspects, provides a ring with a body with a central hole therethrough, the body having a central hole therethrough the body sized and configured for receipt within a circular recess in an end of a generally cylindrical member having a circumference, identification apparatus within or on the body, and the identification apparatus being sensible indicia.

127. The present invention, therefore, in at least certain aspects, provides a method for making a tubular member, the method including making a body for a tubular member, the body having a first end spaced-apart from a second end, and forming a recess around the end of the body, the recess sized and shaped for receipt therein of wave energizable identification apparatus. Such a method may include one or some (in any possible combination) of the following: installing wave energizable identification apparatus in the recess; installing a protector in the recess over the wave energizable identification apparatus; and/or wherein the tubular

member is a piece of drill pipe with an externally threaded pin end spaced-apart from an internally threaded box end, the recess is a recess encircling the pin end, and the wave energizable identification apparatus has antenna apparatus, the method further including positioning the antenna apparatus around and within the pin end recess.

128. The present invention, therefore, in at least certain aspects, provides a method for enhancing a tubular member, the tubular member having a generally cylindrical body with a first end spaced-apart from a second end, the method including forming a circular recess in an end of the tubular member, the recess sized and shaped for receipt therein of wave energizable identification apparatus, the wave energizable identification apparatus including antenna apparatus with antenna apparatus positionable around the circular recess.

129. In conclusion, therefore, it is seen that the present invention and the embodiments disclosed herein and those covered by the appended claims are well adapted to carry out the objectives and obtain the ends set forth. Certain changes can be made in the subject matter without departing from the spirit and the scope of this invention. It is realized that changes are possible within the scope of this invention and it is further intended that each element or step recited in any of the following claims is to be understood as referring to all equivalent elements or steps. The following claims are intended to cover the invention as broadly as legally possible in whatever form it may be utilized. The invention claimed herein is new and novel in accordance with 35 U.S.C. § 102 and satisfies the conditions for patentability in § 102. The invention claimed herein is not obvious in accordance with 35 U.S.C. § 103 and satisfies the conditions for patentability in § 103. This specification and the claims that follow are in accordance with all of the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. The inventors may rely on the Doctrine of Equivalents to determine and assess the scope of their invention and of the claims that follow

as they may pertain to apparatus not materially departing from, but outside of, the literal scope of the invention as set forth in the following claims. Any patent or patent application mentioned herein is incorporated fully herein for all purposes.

5 What is claimed is: